

## Chapter 3

### Basic Design Concepts for SF-A and SF-B Zone Districts

Five fundamental concepts underlie the design principles for the design guidelines and focus on the relationship of each building to its neighbors and to the neighborhood at large:

*Diagram: Zone Design*

#### **A building should be sensitive to its context.**

How a building is sited with respect to its neighbors and its perceived mass and orientation are among the features that should be respected. Context may be perceived at various scales:

- First, consider the neighborhood at large, including the street alignment, landscape patterns and architectural styles that contribute to the neighborhood-wide framework features.
- Secondly, consider streetscape elements, site design features and building setbacks in the immediate vicinity that contribute to the block's character.
- Finally, consider the context of the specific property, including the landscape and architectural elements of immediately adjacent properties.

*SF-A and SF-B Zone Districts*



*A degree of variety within the design elements is desirable, within reasonable limits, because it enhances the visual interest of the block.*



*The current character of the neighborhood exhibits a balance between designs that are similar in appearance and a diversity of details that reflect individual tastes.*



## **A sense of visual continuity exists in many blocks and should be maintained.**

This continuity results from the repetition of similar design elements throughout the neighborhood. The frequent use of clapboard and brick as building materials and the relatively uniform alignment of building fronts within individual blocks are examples of design variables which, when repeated, contribute to the sense of visual continuity. This sense should be maintained.

Conversely, a degree of variety within the design elements is also desirable, within reasonable limits, because it enhances the visual interest of the block.

## **New development should strike a balance between similarity and diversity.**

The current character of the neighborhood exhibits a balance between designs that are similar in appearance and a diversity of details that reflect individual tastes. Variety exists, but it does so within a limited range of design variables such that the overall sense of identity of the neighborhood remains intact. This balance should be maintained.

*The networks of streets, paths and walkways are key organizing elements for the neighborhood, and should be maintained.*

While new buildings should be compatible with the established context, creative designs that continue to express a diversity of ideas should be encouraged. Imitating traditional building types and styles is not required.

## **The neighborhood is "pedestrian friendly," and should remain so.**

Comfortable sidewalks and walking streets certainly are key reasons that make the neighborhoods "friendly" to pedestrians and bicyclists. Many other design elements contribute to the appeal for these users as well: For example, one-story front porches that face the street and the extensive use of ornamental plant materials in front yards help convey a sense of human scale. These elements also provide evidence of human occupation and add a feeling of liveliness to the area.

## **Key framework elements that provide organization to the neighborhood and link it to the community at large should be reinforced.**

The networks of streets and sidewalks are key organizing elements for the neighborhood, and should be maintained. Protecting tree canopies and maintaining front yards and building setbacks are other means of reinforcing basic framework elements.